



# TOPSIDE



OCT 2004

The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

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## TRAINING SCHEDULE

Our January class is full. We will be making a decision in Mid-November on the actual class list.

Diver candidates must submit the following forms to Laurie Barber by December 17th, 2004 for the January Working Diver Class:

- NDP Training and Authorization Request form
- NOAA NDC Standardized Equipment Measurement form
- **Completed** NOAA Diving Physical package, (there are new forms for NOAA Corps officers and Wage Marine employees DD-2808, 2807-1)

Forms are available at the following web address; [www.ndc.noaa.gov/forms.html](http://www.ndc.noaa.gov/forms.html). Fax or mail completed forms to NDC.

Course schedules through May 2005:

Nov 29 - Dec 10	MPIC	Seattle
Dec 13 - Dec 17	DMT	Seattle
Jan 10 - Jan 28	Working Diver	Key West
Jan 24 - Jan 28	Divemaster	Key West
Apr 5 - Apr 8	Refresher (tentative)	Seattle
May 9 - May 27	Working Diver	Seattle
May 23 - May 27	Divemaster	Seattle

We are trying to determine if there is enough interest to have a 2nd MPIC ONLY class. If offered, the dates would be Jan24-Feb5 '05 Please contact Laurie Barber at 206-526-6695 or via e-mail at [lau-barber@noaa.gov](mailto:lau-barber@noaa.gov) if interested.



## ANNUAL REPORTS

On 1 October, the NOAA Diving Center graduated 16 new working divers. Congratulations to the following new divers: Michael Hendon-NMFS, Pasca-goula; LCDR Chris Walsh-PHS, Seattle; Russ Green-NMS, Thunder Bay; John Vavrinec-NMFS, Mont-lake; Steve Sessions-NMFS Lajolla; ENS Natasha Davis-NOAA Ship MILLER FREEMAN; Jim Kinane-SWFSC, Lajolla; ENS Michael Stevenson, Amanda McKinney, Corey Muzzey, and Michael Riley, NOAA Ship RAINIER; and ENS Lindsay Kurelja-NMS Flower Gardens.

NDC also is proud to have graduated the following 10 individuals as NOAA Divemasters on 1 October as well; LTJG Kurt Dreflak-NMFS Santa Rosa; Veronique Koch-NMFS Miami; Elaina Jorgensen-NMFS, AFSC; LTJG Ben Evans-PHB, Seattle; ENS Michael Levine-NMS, Olympic Coast; Nick Tolimieri-NMFS, Montlake; Emma Hickerson-NMS, Flower Gardens; and LTJG Charles Yoos-NOS, BAY HYDROGRAPHER.

As part of the NDP's interagency training, individuals from the NY FBI Dive team, Seattle Fire Department, Seattle Harbor Patrol, and Snohomish County WA Sheriff's Department are also now certified as working divers, and Divemasters.



## PEARL AND HERMES?

On September 20th, NOAA divers in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands came across a major wreck site. Jake Asher, marine debris removal team leader, and his divers found numerous trypots (cauldrons for boiling whale oil), anchors, bricks (from the tryworks structure on deck), whaling implements, fasteners, copper sheathing, cannon, and other hardware scattered on, around, and even under the shallow coral reefs of Pearl and Hermes Atoll. Asher and his team were in the NWHI conducting marine debris removal...cutting away and removing large fishing nets which drift into the atolls and reefs and damage the coral ecosystem. This effort has been ongoing since 1996 by the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center and its Coral Reef Ecosystem Division (parts of the Coral Reef Program) and other partners. The discovery of this "debris" of a different sort excited the team and, for a while, turned them into amateur archaeologists.

This was not an altogether unexpected discovery. Before the cruise Dr. Hans Van Tilburg, Pacific regional maritime heritage coordinator with the NMSP, met with the debris team to brief them on the characteristics of historic shipwrecks and other artifacts in the NWHI. The debris teams cover miles of ocean bottom by tow board, searching for nets in high-probability impact areas. NOAA divers Jake Asher and Megan Moews, as well as Van Tilburg, realized that it was only a matter of time before significant discoveries occurred. It was the perfect opportunity for collaboration between units within NOAA. With such preparation, the divers/discoverers at Pearl and Hermes could recognize scattered shipwreck elements, and were familiar with non-invasive recording techniques and site protocols. These artifacts are not for taking, for they are historic resources within State waters, and are also a part of the USFWS National wildlife refuge as well. The debris cruise discovery gives a big boost to NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program, an initiative begun by the NMSP to protect and preserve such sites as national treasures.

Though a positive identification has yet to be made, the only records of whaling ships lost at Pearl and Hermes Atoll are, indeed, the British registered whalers Pearl and Hermes themselves. Both sailed in consort from Honolulu to the newly discovered Japan Grounds in 1822, a route that led them through the unfamiliar and treacherous NWHI. The Pearl (actually an American-built ship captured by the British in the War of 1812) ran aground first, and the Hermes moved towards the reef to help. Both ended up aground. The crews were shipwrecked on nearby islands for months, eventually picked up by a passing vessel. Further site work will tell more about this event and provide a window into our maritime past and our human relationships to the sea.



Trypots (large cauldrons used to render whale oil) near the shallow reef at Pearl and Hermes. Photo by NOAA diver Darla White

## OBSERVER DIVERS

The Observer Diver certification is a temporary certification that can be used by recreationally certified VIP's, the media, etc., to observe and or film NOAA underwater operations.

Standards are outlined in **NOAA Form 56-62, "NOAA OBSERVER DIVER REPORT."** This form is available from the "forms" section of the NDC web site and provides a handy checklist and report form to assist in the Observer Diver process. The required **"OBSERVER DIVER MEDICAL HISTORY REPORT"** must be completed and approved by the NDC prior to any diving operations. This form is also available in the "forms" section of the website. Contact NDC if you have any questions about the Observer Diver certification process.

